SUPERMAN
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MAY
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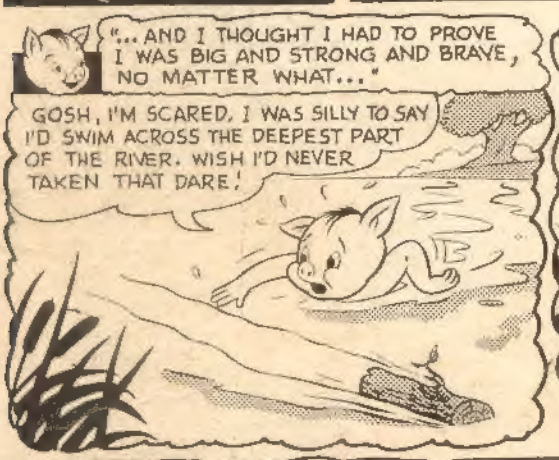
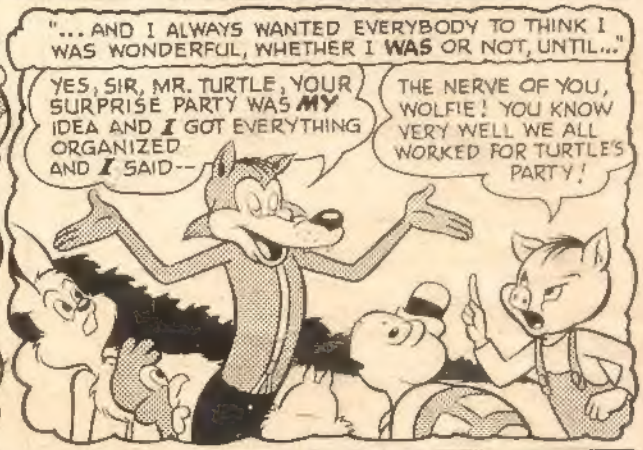
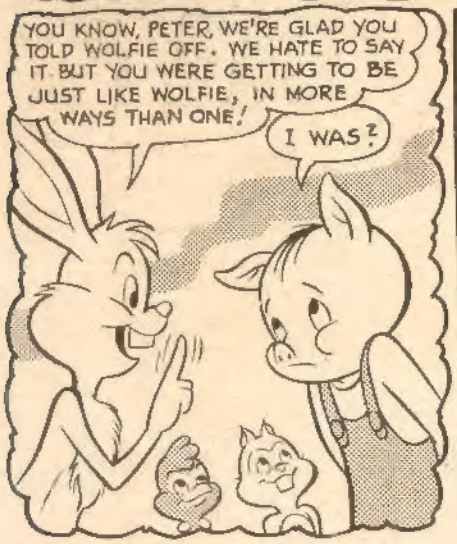
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
Featuring "The HUMAN PETS!"
OUR YOUNG CAPTOR FROM OUT OF SPACE LEFT THE TOP OFF OUR CAGE--AND HIS HOUSEHOLD PET IS GOING FOR US!

PETER PORKCHOPS in "The SECRET of the HAPPY PIG!"







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ACE MORGAN

FEARLESS JET PILOT

PROF HALE

MASTER SKINDIVER

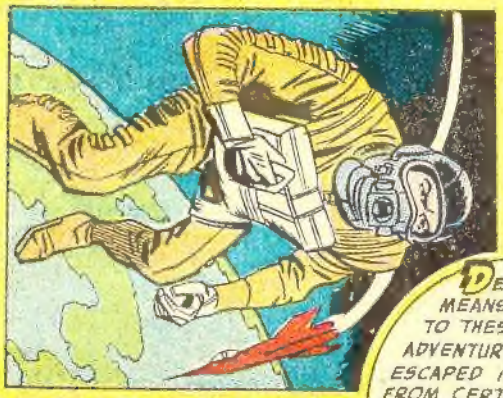
RED RYAN

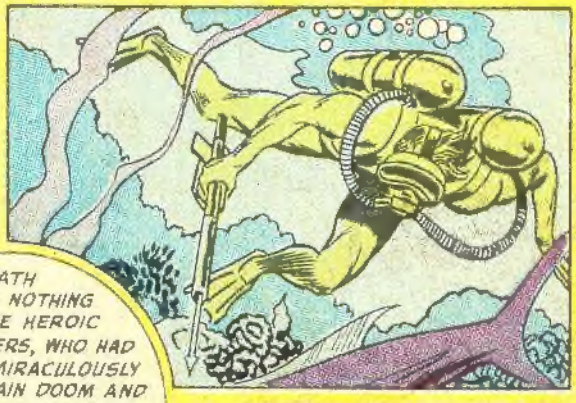
CIRCUS DAREDEVIL

ROCKY DAVIS

OLYMPIC WRESTLING CHAMPION

THESE ARE MEN OF RECKLESS COURAGE WHO SEEK OUT AND DEFY THE UNKNOWN WHICH LURKS IN MYSTERIOUS PLACES, GRIMLY COILED... THE LEAGUE OF DEATH CHEATERS!





DEATH MEANS NOTHING TO THESE HEROIC ADVENTURERS, WHO HAD ESCAPED MIRACULOUSLY FROM CERTAIN DOOM AND DEDICATED THEMSELVES TO A SECOND LIFE! THEY ARE THE MEN **WHO LIVE ON BORROWED TIME---**

CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN

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CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
LOOK OUT! RUN FOR YOUR LIVES!
NO! THEY MUST BE STOPPED BEFORE THEY REACH THE OUTSIDE WORLD!
THEIR MOTTO IS "DARE ANYTHING" AND THEIR ASSIGNMENTS ARE THE MOST UNUSUAL AND INCREDIBLE TASKS EVER ENCOUNTERED! FOLLOW THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN INTO THE VAST DARKNESS BEYOND THE REALM OF MAN--WHERE OMINOUS SHAPES AND SHADOWS LURK--AS THEY PURSUE THE FANTASTIC TRAIL OF...
THE MAN WHO TAMPERED WITH INFINITY

AT AN EMERGENCY CONFERENCE IN WASHINGTON, D.C. ...
WE FLEW IN AS SOON AS WE GOT YOUR MESSAGE, SIR! THE DETAILS YOU'VE GIVEN US SEEM INCREDIBLE!
THEY ARE INCREDIBLE! VALUABLE SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT HAS BEEN STOLEN IN SEVERAL RAIDS ON INDUSTRIAL RESEARCH LABORATORIES!
THE THIEVES ARE LIKE WILL O' THE WISPS! DESPITE ALL SAFEGUARDS, THEY ENTER AND LEAVE UNDETECTED! HOWEVER, WE ALMOST CAUGHT THEM IN THEIR LAST ATTEMPT!
SO YOU TOLD US! BUT JUNE WALKER WAS IN THAT LAB-- AND SHE VANISHED WITH THEM!
I CAN'T WAIT TO GET MY HANDS ON THOSE GUYS! WHEN THEY TOOK JUNE WALKER, THEY GOT ONE OF US! SHE'S AN HONORARY MEMBER OF THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN!
AND ONE OF OUR MOST HIGHLY-REGARDED YOUNG SCIENTISTS!
YOU ALSO MENTIONED THIS NEW TRANSISTOR THE THIEVES WERE AFTER... IF THEY DIDN'T GET IT, THEY'LL STRIKE AGAIN!... AND THIS TIME WE'LL BE READY FOR THEM!
AT THE SCENE OF THE LAST RAID, A FEW NIGHTS PASS WITHOUT A MISHAP...THEN...
AH! WE'VE ARRIVED! THE G-MEN WILL NEVER LEARN THAT WALLS MEAN NOTHING TO US!
I'VE GOT THE TRANSISTOR! NOW, LET'S--
WAIT! WHAT WAS THAT?

TAKE THEM, BOYS! WATCH OUT FOR TRICKS!

BUT DURING THE STRUGGLE...

WHAT IS THIS THING? WHAT ARE YOU UP TO?

THE ANSWER COMES QUICKLY! A ROD OF WHITE LIGHT KNIFES INTO THE ROOM AND ENVELOPS THE COMBATANTS... VANISHING WITH THEM IN ONE SWEEP!

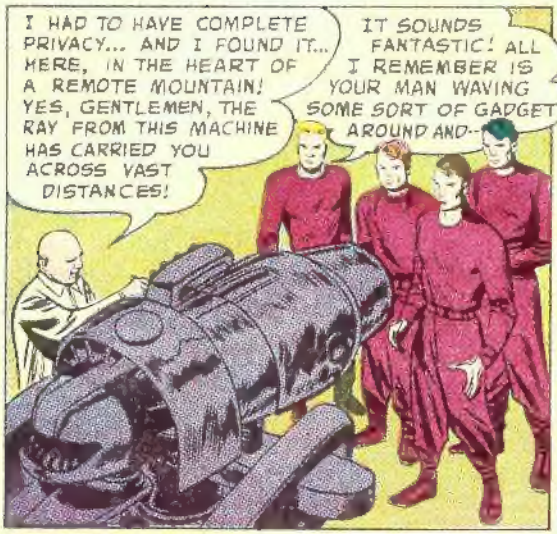
THE CHALLENGERS EXPERIENCE A STRANGE SENSATION, AND WHEN IT WEARS OFF...

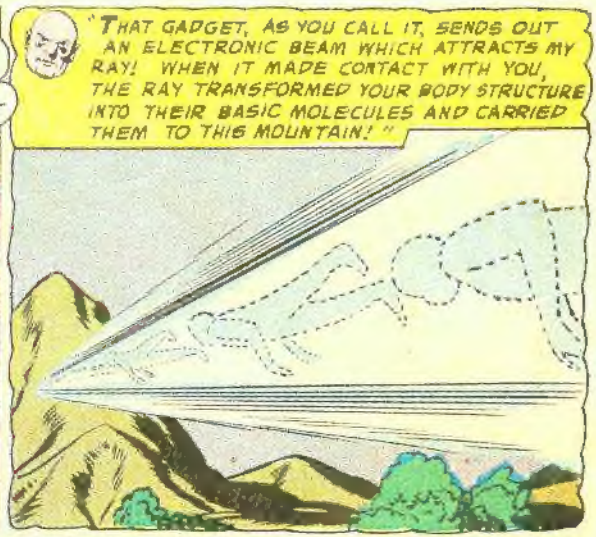
WHAT--? WHERE ARE WE? WHO ARE YOU?

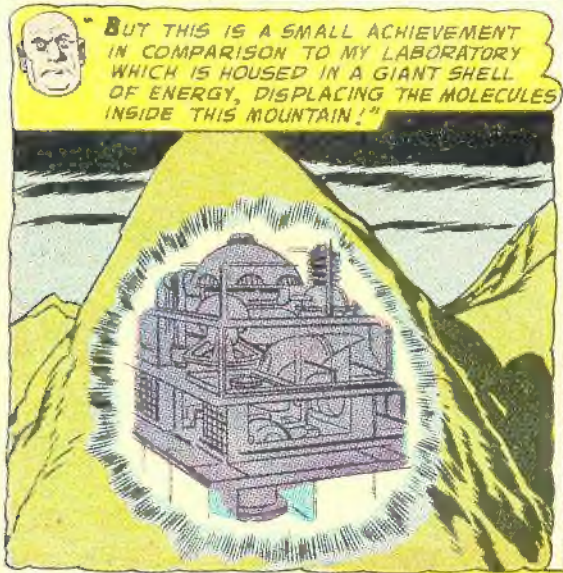
IN THE GREAT BROTHERHOOD OF SCIENCE, THE FACE OF **OLAN TAGORIAN** WOULD BE INSTANTLY FAMILIAR! YOU GENTLEMEN ARE EVIDENTLY OF A DIFFERENT CALLING!

I'VE READ ENOUGH NEWSPAPERS TO REMEMBER THE NAME "TAGORIAN"... YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO HAVE DROPPED FROM SIGHT ABOUT THREE YEARS AGO... THERE WAS A BIG FUSS ABOUT YOUR RADICAL EXPERIMENTS...

THE BUNGLERS! THE FOOLS! THEY TRIED TO INTERFERE WITH MY WORK!


I HAD TO HAVE COMPLETE PRIVACY... AND I FOUND IT... HERE, IN THE HEART OF A REMOTE MOUNTAIN! YES, GENTLEMEN, THE RAY FROM THIS MACHINE HAS CARRIED YOU ACROSS VAST DISTANCES!
IT SOUNDS FANTASTIC! ALL I REMEMBER IS YOUR MAN WAVING SOME SORT OF GADGET AROUND AND--


"THAT GADGET, AS YOU CALL IT, SENDS OUT AN ELECTRONIC BEAM WHICH ATTRACTS MY RAY! WHEN IT MADE CONTACT WITH YOU, THE RAY TRANSFORMED YOUR BODY STRUCTURE INTO THEIR BASIC MOLECULES AND CARRIED THEM TO THIS MOUNTAIN!"


"BUT THIS IS A SMALL ACHIEVEMENT IN COMPARISON TO MY LABORATORY WHICH IS HOUSED IN A GIANT SHELL OF ENERGY, DISPLACING THE MOLECULES INSIDE THIS MOUNTAIN!"

SURE, YOU'RE A GENIUS--WORKING WITH INVENTIONS YOU STEAL FROM OTHER SCIENTISTS!
I HAVE TAKEN THEM SO I COULD COMPLETE MY WORK THAT MUCH SOONER! WITH THAT TRANSISTOR IN MY HANDS, I AM NOW READY TO DO WHAT NO MAN HAS EVER DARED!

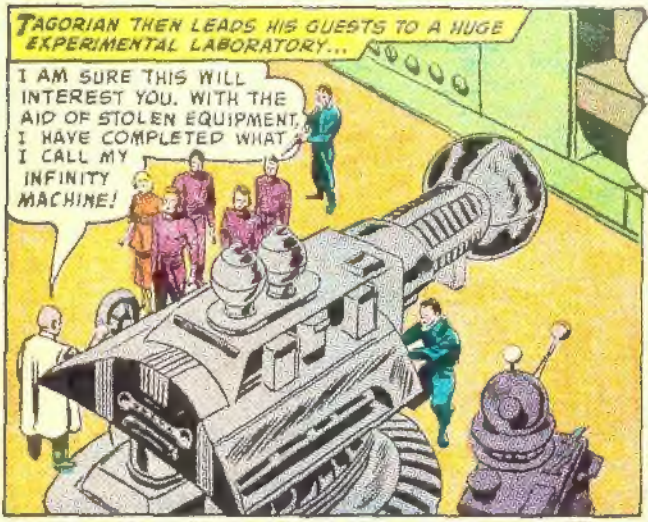
ENOUGH OF THAT, TAGORIAN! WHAT HAVE YOU DONE WITH JUNE WALKER?
SHE IS WELL, I ASSURE YOU!

TAGORIAN THEN TAKES THE CHALLENGERS TO A DOOR, AND...
HERE IS MISS WALKER, GENTLEMEN!
JUNE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?

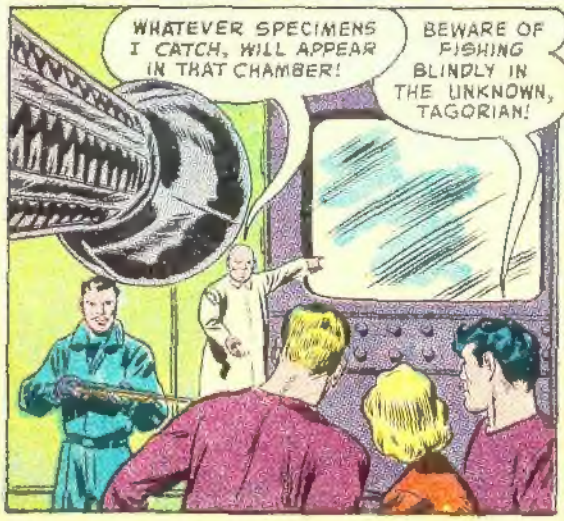
OH, NO! DON'T TELL ME THAT TAGORIAN CAUGHT YOU BOYS, TOO?
WELL, YOU MIGHT SAY WE'RE NEW GUESTS IN THIS HIDDEN HOTEL... BUT WE'LL CHECK OUT WHEN WE'VE DONE OUR JOB HERE!

THAT WON'T BE EASY! HE'S ALWAYS ON HIS GUARD! TELL ME, DID HE GET THE TRANSISTOR?
I'M AFRAID SO, JUNE... ONE OF HIS MEN HAD IT WHEN THE RAY SCOOPED UP THE LOT OF US!

SUDDENLY...
THE TRANSISTOR IS READY TO PERFORM ITS FUNCTION IN A VERY IMPORTANT EXPERIMENT, MY FRIENDS.. IF YOU WOULD CARE TO WITNESS--
BEING A "CAPTIVE AUDIENCE," WE HAVE NO CHOICE, TAGORIAN...


TAGORIAN THEN LEADS HIS GUESTS TO A HUGE EXPERIMENTAL LABORATORY...
I AM SURE THIS WILL INTEREST YOU. WITH THE AID OF STOLEN EQUIPMENT, I HAVE COMPLETED WHAT I CALL MY INFINITY MACHINE!

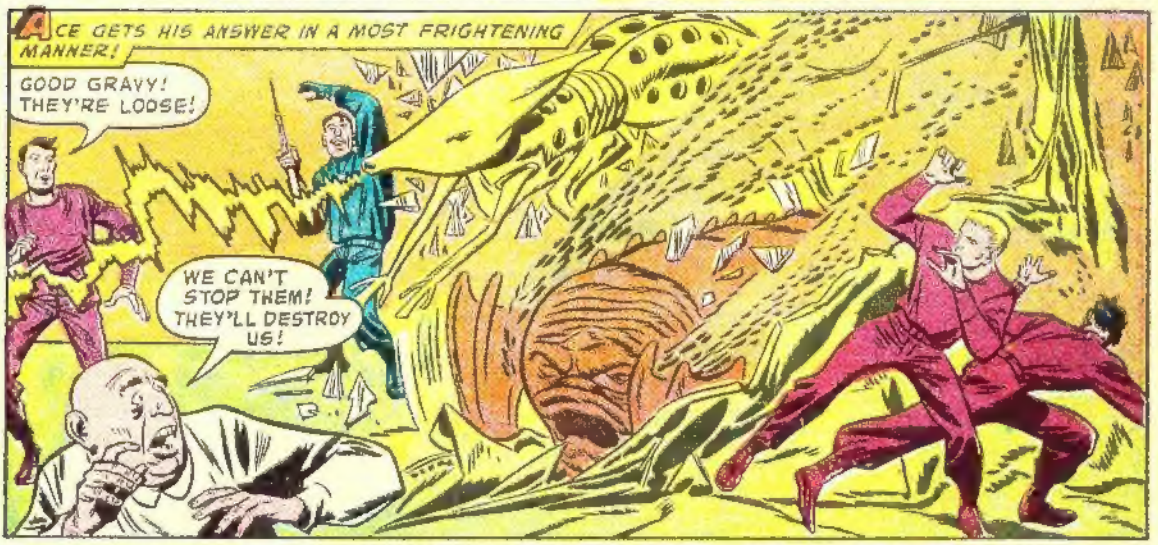
WITH THIS GREAT INSTRUMENT, I SHALL NOW REACH INTO PLACES BEYOND ALL CONCEPTS OF NATURE AS WE KNOW IT!... REGIONS WHICH MUST BE TRACKED BY MATHEMATICS INSTEAD OF BY TELESCOPE! AND YET, THIS PLACE IS AS REAL AS YOU OR I!


WHATEVER SPECIMENS I CATCH, WILL APPEAR IN THAT CHAMBER!
BEWARE OF FISHING BLINDLY IN THE UNKNOWN, TAGORIAN!

TAGORIAN IGNORES THE WARNING...
WOW! THAT ELECTRICAL DISCHARGE--IT MUST CARRY A MOUNTAIN OF HIGH VOLTAGE!
BAH! WE BEGIN! WATCH!

THE ONLOOKERS STARE IN AWED SILENCE AT THE TWO CREATURES MATERIALIZED IN THE CHAMBER-- LIVING THINGS NOT OF THIS EARTH!
GREAT SCOTT! THIS IS UNBELIEVABLE! WHAT CAN THEY BE?
LIFE FROM THE UNKNOWN, MY FRIEND! MY NEW GUESTS! HA HA HA!

LOOK, ACE! THOSE THINGS ARE TRYING TO BREAK OUT! THEY ARE IN A PANIC!
THEY DON'T KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENED TO THEM! ARE YOU SURE THAT CHAMBER WILL HOLD, TAGORIAN?


ACE GETS HIS ANSWER IN A MOST FRIGHTENING MANNER!
GOOD GRAVY! THEY'RE LOOSE!
WE CAN'T STOP THEM! THEY'LL DESTROY US!

DRIVEN AWAY FROM THE CONTROLS OF HIS INFINITY MACHINE, TAGORIAN RUSHES TO HIS MOLECULAR RAY INSTRUMENT, AND AFTER MAKING LIGHTNING ADJUSTMENTS, HE TURNS HIS RAY ON THE CREATURES!
THIS WILL GET RID OF THEM!
THE CREATURES... THEY'RE VANISHING!

WHAT HAVE YOU DONE, TAGORIAN? WHERE ARE THOSE CREATURES?
I SET THE MOLECULAR RAY ON "TRANSMITTING"! IT GOT THEM OUT OF HERE... WE'RE SAFE!

TAGORIAN! THOSE CREATURES WILL LAND AMONG THE PEOPLE OF THE OUTSIDE WORLD! HOW COULD YOU DO IT, TO SAVE YOUR OWN SKIN?
THIS IS TERRIBLE, ACE! THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT THOSE THINGS WILL DO!

AT THAT MOMENT...
ACE! WE'VE TAKEN OVER! WHEN THESE BIRDS RAN FROM THE CREATURES, RED AND I JUMPED THEM AND TOOK THEIR RIFLES!
IF ONE OF US STAYS BEHIND TO WATCH THESE BUZZARDS, THE REST CAN FOLLOW THOSE CREATURES IN THE MOLECULAR RAY AND TRY TO HEAD THEM OFF!

IT'S GOT TO BE DONE! JUNE WILL KEEP THESE MEN UNDER GUARD WHILE THE FOUR OF US GO THROUGH THE RAY!
WE'LL HAVE TO WORK FAST! THE MOMENT WE GET THOSE THINGS BOTTLED UP-- IF WE CAN-- WE'LL SIGNAL FOR THE "RECEIVING" RAY!

BUT IF THE RAY DRAWS THOSE THINGS BACK HERE, JUNE WILL BE IN DANGER!
NOT IF TAGORIAN'S INFINITY MACHINE PICKS THEM UP WHEN THEY ARRIVE AND SHUNTS THEM BACK INTO THE UNKNOWN!

WE'VE GOT TO CATCH THOSE THINGS FIRST! TAGORIAN, CAN YOU PINPOINT THE SPOT WHERE THE RAY SET THOSE CREATURES DOWN?
THE LAST TRANSMISSION AREA IS STILL INDICATED ON THESE COORDINATES!

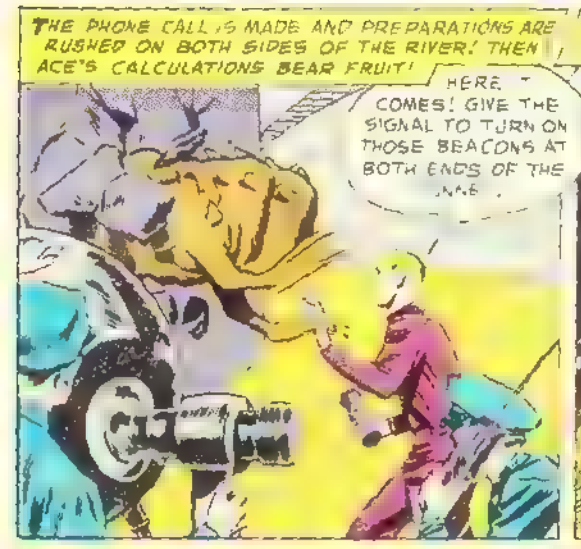
ALL RIGHT, BOYS, WE'RE GOING OUT! EACH MAN CHECK HIS SIGNAL GADGET SO HE CAN CONTACT THE RAY WHEN READY TO GO BACK!
I'VE GOT MY FINGERS CROSSED! TURN ON THE RAY, TAGORIAN!

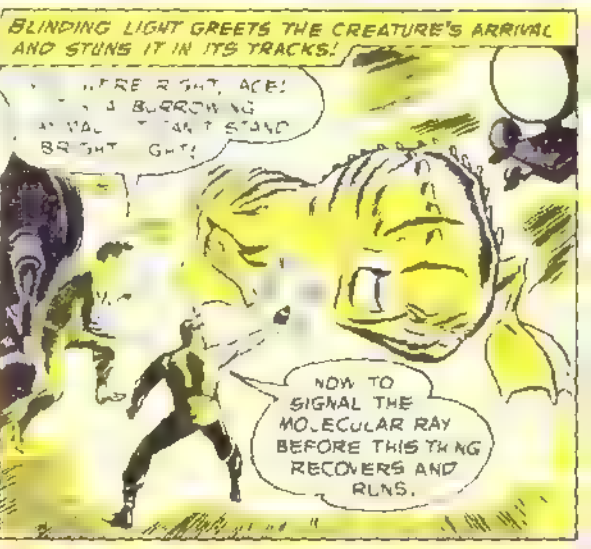
MEANWHILE, IN A SMALL AMERICAN COMMUNITY, A YOUNG RADIO HAM IS BUSILY ENGAGED IN HIS HOBBY..
THAT'S STRANGE! THE SET WAS OPERATING A SECOND AGO. IT'S AS IF SOMETHING HAD DRAWN OF THE CURRENT...
YEOW! WHAT IS THAT THING?
WELS
WXGM
BXM?
THAT VERY MOMENT, NEARBY.
WELL, WE'VE ARRIVED! BUT THERE'S NO SIGN OF THE CREATURES!
IT WON'T BE HARD TO FIND THEM THAT LOOKS LIKE TROUBLE COMING NOW!
I THINK WE KNOW WHAT IT'S ABOUT, SON! JUST TELL US WHERE THIS THING IS!
THAT WAY AT MY HOUSE! THE WILDEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN! I'M SCARED!
THERE'S NO TIME TO LOSE, PROF - YOU PAIR OFF WITH RED AND GO WITH THE BOY ROCKY AND I WILL TRACK DOWN THE OTHER CREATURE.
THE TWO PARTIES QUICKLY SEPARATE AND THE HUNT IS ON!
THAT'S IT. I DIDN'T NOTICE IT UNTIL MY HAM RADIO FADED OUT! IT'S LIKE THAT THING SWALLOWED THE CURRENT
YOU MAY HAVE AN IDEA THERE

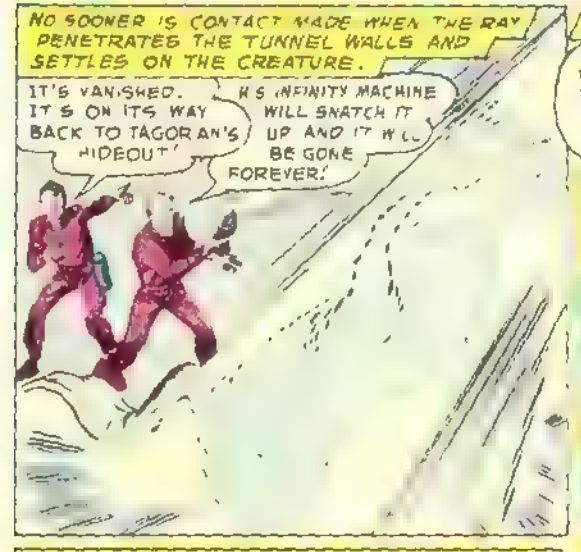
ELECTRICITY COULD WELL BE ITS DIET! BY JUPITER-- IF THAT THING FINDS ITS WAY TO A POWERHOUSE OR A DAM, IT COULD DRAIN ENOUGH CURRENT TO STALL TRANSPORTATION AND INDUSTRY!
A ROPE! MAYBE, I CAN LASSO THE THING
BUT AS RED NEARS HIS QUARRY, AN INVISIBLE FORCE FREEZES HIM IN HIS TRACKS!
WHAT-?
AS PROF SURGES FORWARD TO HELP HIS FALLEN FRIEND...
THE THING IS EMITTING SOME SORT OF VIBRATIONS I CAN FEEL THEM THROUGH MY ENTIRE BODY!
THE UNSEEN VIBRATIONS STIR THE VEGETATION...
ITS VIBRATIONS ARE GETTING STRONG ENOUGH TO SHATTER GLASS! THEY'RE SOUND VIBRATIONS! THIS THING CONSUMES ELECTRICITY AND CONVERTS IT INTO SUPERSONIC WAVES--SOUND ABOVE THE PITCH LEVEL OF THE HUMAN EAR!
CRAS
LOOK, KID! HIGHTAIL IT TO THE SHERIFF! TELL HIM TO GET HERE WITH A "TEN-BY-TEN" BOX MADE OUT OF "FIBERTEX"-- PRONTO!
YES, SIR! B-BUT WHAT ABOUT YOU.. AND THAT THING?
I'M NOT IMPORTANT! THE MAIN THING IS TO KEEP THIS CREATURE FROM SPREADING ITS INJURIOUS VIBRATIONS ELSEWHERE! AND THAT'S GOING TO TAKE DOING!

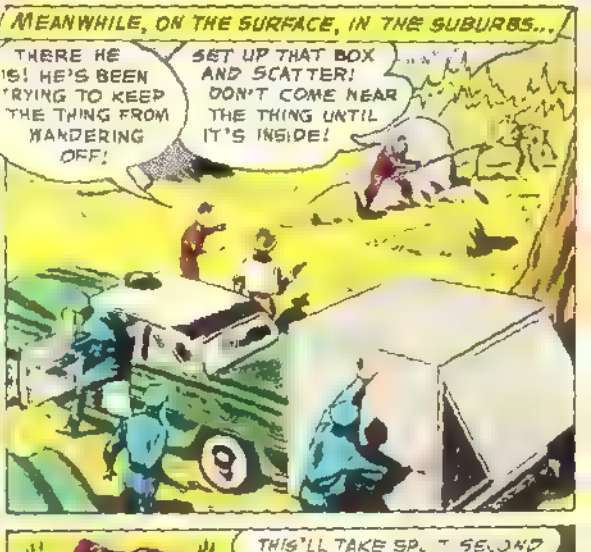
WHAT'S HAPPENED, MAC?
ALL FURY'S BROKEN LOOSE ON LEVEL FOUR! SOMETHING LIKE A TANK WITH SHOVELS FOR HANDS AND FEET HAS DUG ITS WAY INTO THE
THIS WAY, ACE. I SEE MEN RUNNING UP AHEAD.
CAREFUL, ROCKY! YOU MAY RUN SMACK INTO IT!
DYNAMITE... I'LL TAKE A FEW OF THESE STICKS. IT MAY DO THE TRICK.
START RUNNING, MISTER, THAT THING'S COMING THIS WAY-- PLOWING THROUGH THE EARTH LIKE IT WAS CHEESE!
AFTER HE LIGHTS THE DYNAMITE.
THAT THING LOOKS LIKE AN EXPRESS TRAIN WITH ITS THROTTLE WIDE OPEN! BUT THIS OUGHT TO STOP IT IN ITS TRACKS!
KABOOM
WHEN THE SMOKE CLEARS
ROCKY! YOU RE KLESS FOOL! YOU'RE LUCKY TO BE ALIVE
THE DYNAMITE-- DID IT WORK?
I HEAR IT MOVING, ROCKY! IT'S STILL ACTIVE!
THEN, IT'S YOUR BABY, ACE! I-IT'S UP TO YOU--

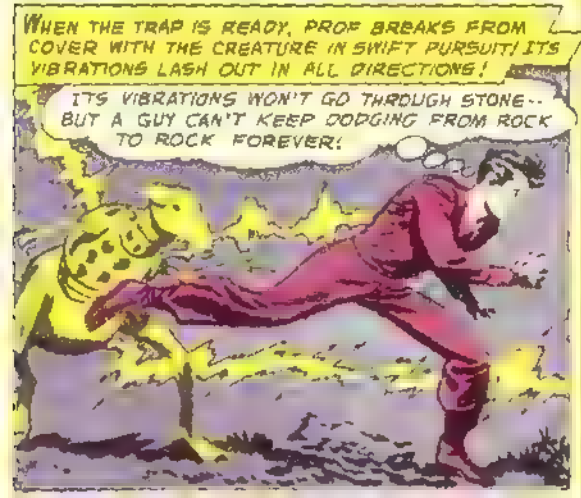
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
WATER THEY FLOOD THE TUNNELS WITH IT IN CASE OF FIRE! LET'S SEE HOW OUR DIGGING FRIEND TAKES TO IT
THERE SHE BLOWS
WITH THE WATER AND BURROWS OFF IN
WE DIDN'T STOP IT, ROCKY, BUT IF WE GET THE AUTHORITIES TO HELP, I'VE GOT AN IDEA THAT MAY WORK!
WHEN THE CHALLENGERS EMERGE ON THE SURFACE THEY FIND THE STATE POLICE ALREADY ON THE SCENE.
GLAD TO SEE YOU MEN. WE'VE GOT TO GET INTO ACTION RIGHT AWAY
WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THAT THING DOWN THERE
AS HURRIEDLY AS HE CAN.
GREAT SCOTT THE BIG CITY ACROSS THE RIVER AS A ROCK FOUNDATION
IT CAN-- THE NEW TRAFFIC TUNNEL RUNS RIGHT UNDER THE RIVER BED AND LEADS INTO THE CITY PROPER
THAT'S RIGHT
THEN THAT TUNNEL CAN BE ITS QUICKEST PATH TO THE MINERALS UNDER THE CITY!
I'M CERTAIN THAT WE CAN TRAP THAT CREATURE FROM BOTH ENDS OF THE TUNNEL IF WE PHONE THE AUTHORITIES ACROSS THE RIVER

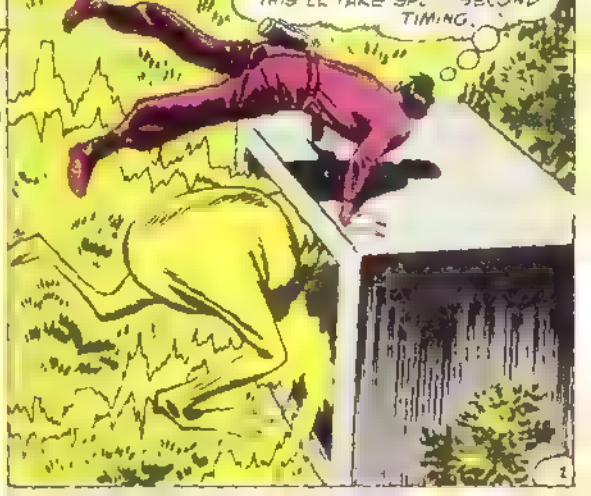

THE PHONE CALL IS MADE AND PREPARATIONS ARE RUSHED ON BOTH SIDES OF THE RIVER! THEN ACE'S CALCULATIONS BEAR FRUIT!
HERE IT COMES! GIVE THE SIGNAL TO TURN ON THOSE BEACONS AT BOTH ENDS OF THE TUNNEL.

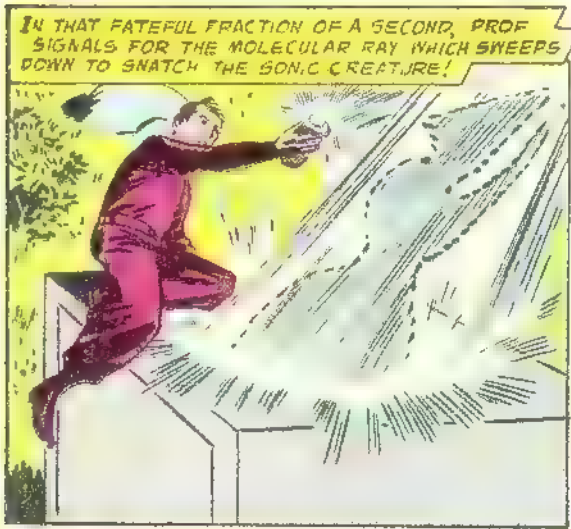

BLINDING LIGHT GREETS THE CREATURE'S ARRIVAL AND STUNS IT IN ITS TRACKS!
NOW TO SIGNAL THE MOLECULAR RAY BEFORE THIS THING RECOVERS AND RUNS.


NO SOONER IS CONTACT MADE WHEN THE RAY PENETRATES THE TUNNEL WALLS AND SETTLES ON THE CREATURE.
IT'S VANISHED. IT'S ON ITS WAY BACK TO TAGORAN'S HIDEOUT!
HIS INFINITY MACHINE WILL SNATCH IT UP AND IT WILL BE GONE FOREVER!


MEANWHILE, ON THE SURFACE, IN THE SUBURBS...
THERE HE IS! HE'S BEEN TRYING TO KEEP THE THING FROM WANDERING OFF!
SET UP THAT BOX AND SCATTER! DON'T COME NEAR THE THING UNTIL IT'S INSIDE!

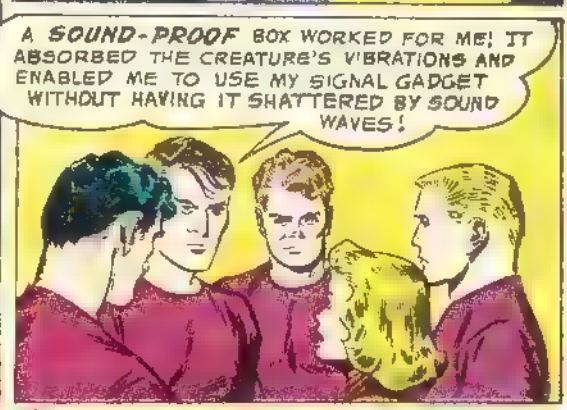

WHEN THE TRAP IS READY, PROF BREAKS FROM COVER WITH THE CREATURE IN SWIFT PURSUIT! ITS VIBRATIONS LASH OUT IN ALL DIRECTIONS!
ITS VIBRATIONS WON'T GO THROUGH STONE-- BUT A GUY CAN'T KEEP DODGING FROM ROCK TO ROCK FOREVER!

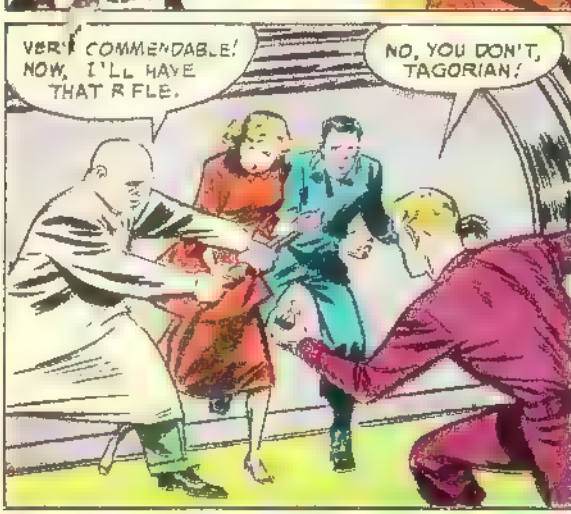

THIS'LL TAKE SPLIT SECOND TIMING.


IN THAT FATEFUL FRACTION OF A SECOND, PROF SIGNALS FOR THE MOLECULAR RAY WHICH SWEEPS DOWN TO SNATCH THE SONIC CREATURE!

WHEN THE THING REACHES TAGORIAN'S LABORATORY...
THE SECOND SPECIMEN IS BEING TRANSMITTED INTO THE UNKNOWN! THE BOYS HAVE DONE IT!

THE INFINITY MACHINE IS THEN TURNED OFF AS THE CHALLENGERS THEMSELVES REAPPEAR IN THE MOLECULAR RAY!
JUNE! IS EVERYTHING OKAY ON THIS END?
OH, YES! IT WORKED PERFECTLY! THOSE THINGS ARE GONE! YOU BOYS WERE WONDERFUL! HOW DID YOU DO IT?

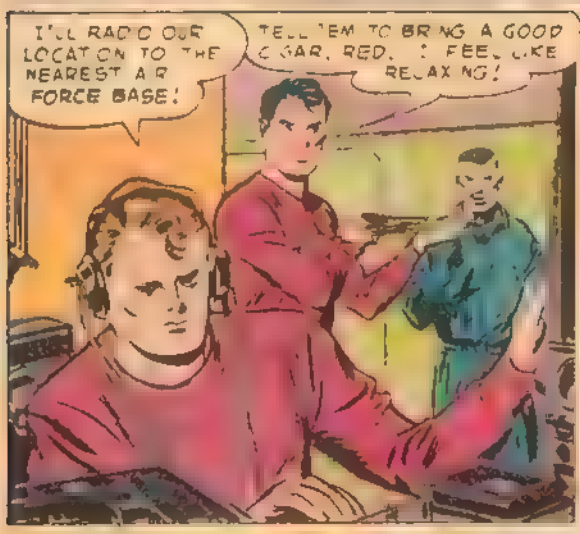

A SOUND-PROOF BOX WORKED FOR ME! IT ABSORBED THE CREATURE'S VIBRATIONS AND ENABLED ME TO USE MY SIGNAL GADGET WITHOUT HAVING IT SHATTERED BY SOUND WAVES!

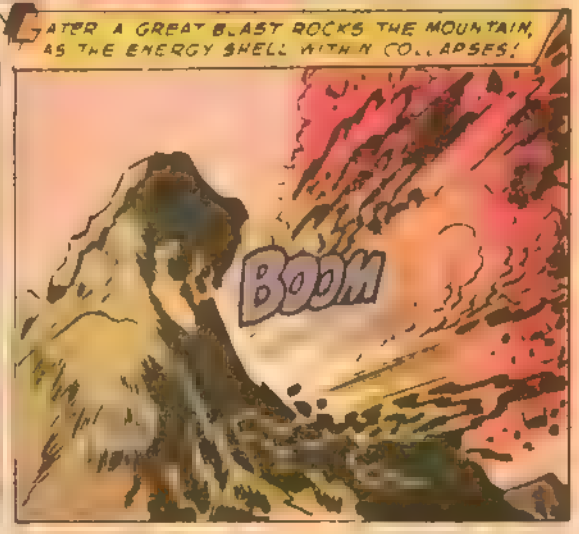

VERY COMMENDABLE! NOW, I'LL HAVE THAT RIFLE.
NO, YOU DON'T, TAGORIAN!

TAGORIAN'S ATTEMPT TO REGAIN CONTROL RESULTS IN A SEE-SAW BATTLE!

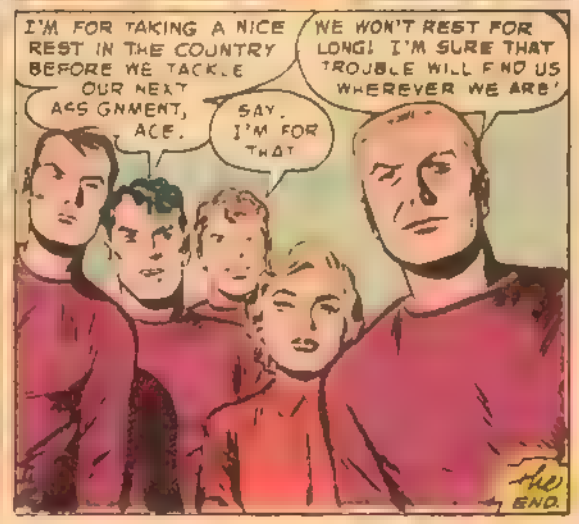
FINALLY
MY LABORATORY IS A WRECK.
YOU WON'T NEED IT WHERE YOU'RE GOING TAGORIAN

THE MOLECULAR RAY IS OUT OF COMMISSION! NOW SHOW US HOW TO BLAST THROUGH TO THE OUTSIDE WORLD! THIS FRACAS IS OVER FOR ALL OF US!


I'LL RADIO OUR LOCATION TO THE NEAREST AIR FORCE BASE!
TELL 'EM TO BRING A GOOD CIGAR, RED. I FEEL LIKE RELAXING!


LATER A GREAT BLAST ROCKS THE MOUNTAIN, AS THE ENERGY SHELL WITHIN COLLAPSES!
BOOM

AND WALKING FORTH TO AWAIT RESCUE
THERE IS THE AIR FORCE BOYS! WE'RE ON OUR WAY HOME!


I'M FOR TAKING A NICE REST IN THE COUNTRY BEFORE WE TACKLE OUR NEXT ASSIGNMENT, ACE.
SAY, I'M FOR THAT
WE WON'T REST FOR LONG! I'M SURE THAT TROUBLE WILL FIND US WHEREVER WE ARE!
END.

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DANGER: SPACE SHIP LANDING

THREE days earlier, radar had picked up a flight of unidentified aircraft of unusual size. Then, on the morning of the third day had come the alert from a skywatcher to the top security office in the nation.

Security Officers Fred Wallace and Jim McCoy were flown out to the remote desert area at once.

They were astonished by the sight of the strange craft. It resembled a crane more than it did preconceived notions about what a ship from outer space should look like. The entire structure was sealed tight, and two huge lenses glared out from the side.

High Army and Navy officials were already at the scene when the two Security Officers arrived.

"Apparently," theorized an Army colonel, "this ship was part of that flight we picked up several days ago. It probably ran into some engine trouble and crash-landed!"

"Any sign of passengers?" asked Wallace.

"Not a peep from the inside," replied the colonel. "But we know they're in there, all right!"

"How do you know that?" asked McCoy.

"Watch and I'll show you!" said the colonel. Slowly, he approached the crashed ship. But he got no closer than a few yards when two powerful beams suddenly shot down at him from the lenses. The colonel tried to advance against the invisible ray force, but it was a losing fight. When he retreated to join the others, the beams blinked out.

McCoy stepped forward. "Look here," he said, "this is the biggest thing that has ever happened in the history of the earth—the first visitors to our planet! We've got to get inside that thing!"

"What do you suggest?" asked the colonel, "that we blast it open?"

"If necessary," answered McCoy. "Have you determined what kind of metal that thing is made of?"

"Our experts got as close as they could to make a test," replied the colonel. "They haven't the faintest idea what it is, because there isn't an ore on earth like it."

McCoy turned and looked almost yearningly at the array of big guns the Army had wheeled into position. "One good angle shot might split open its seams without hurting the creatures inside. I'm in favor of giving it a try!" he said.

The colonel turned to Fred Wallace. "Is that your feeling, too?" he asked.

Wallace didn't answer right away. His gaze wandered from the ship to the skies. At length, he spoke, "I don't know. I agree with you, Colonel, that this belonged to that flight we picked up days ago. In that case, if we happened to destroy the creatures in this ship, we might be inviting a revenge attack from the others!"

The colonel pursed his lips thoughtfully and nodded. "I didn't even consider that possibility," he said, somberly.

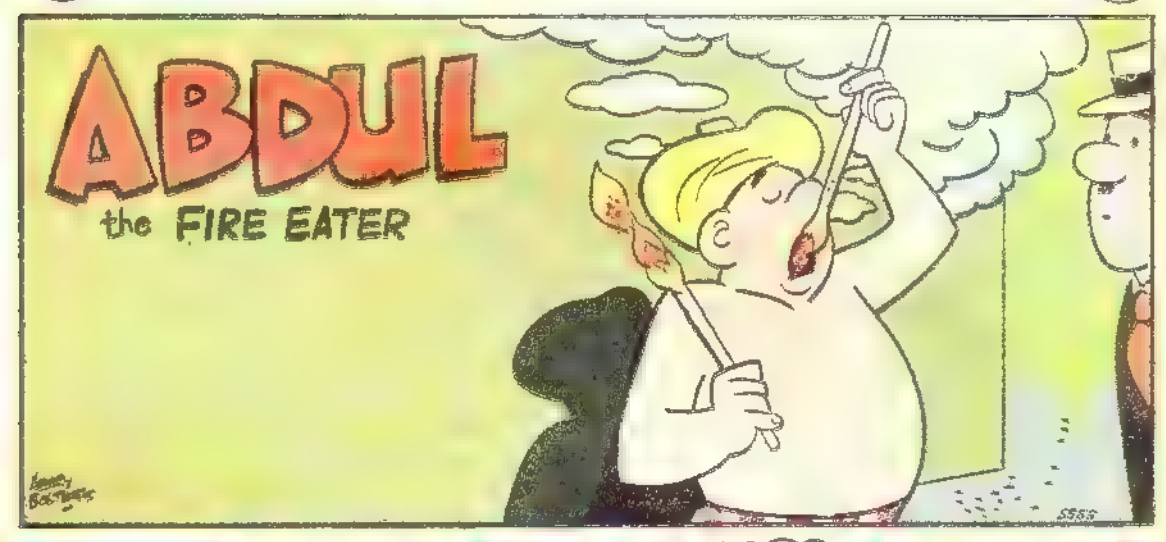
Suddenly, the ship began to move. Deep grinding, groaning sounds filled the air. As the earthmen recoiled, two giant claw-like objects protruded and partly lifted the body of the ship inches off the ground.

McCoy's voice rose above the din. "It's going to take off!"

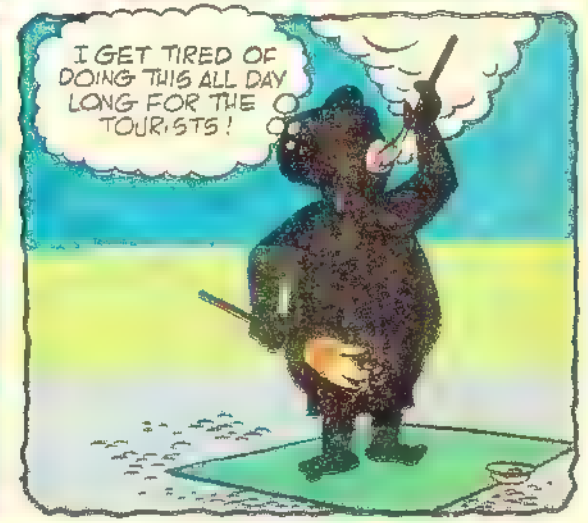
And as the craft shot skyward, the men suddenly saw some drops of purplish liquid on the ground.

"We lost our chance," said McCoy, "our one chance to see a creature from outer space."

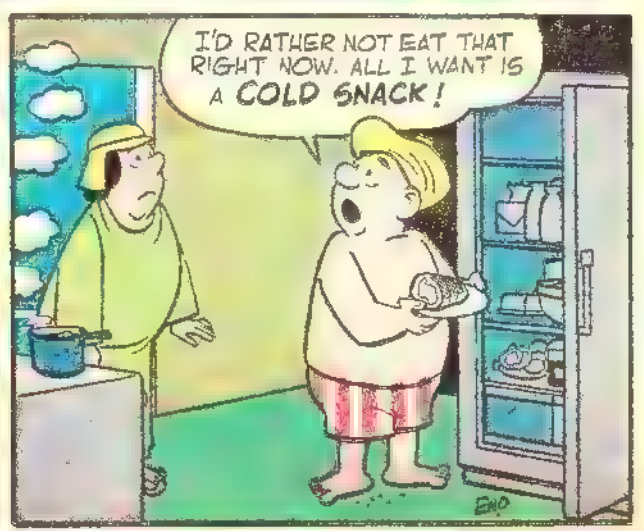
But Wallace shook his head. "You're wrong, Jim," he said. "I believe we *did* see one." He turned his eyes from the drops of purplish fluid—the life-blood that had dripped out of the injured thing from outer space when it crashed—and scanned the skies. "What we thought was the space ship was actually the creature itself. Aren't you glad we didn't use a big gun on it?"


ABDUL
the FIRE EATER

ABDUL IS THE GREATEST FIRE EATER IN THE FAR EAST!

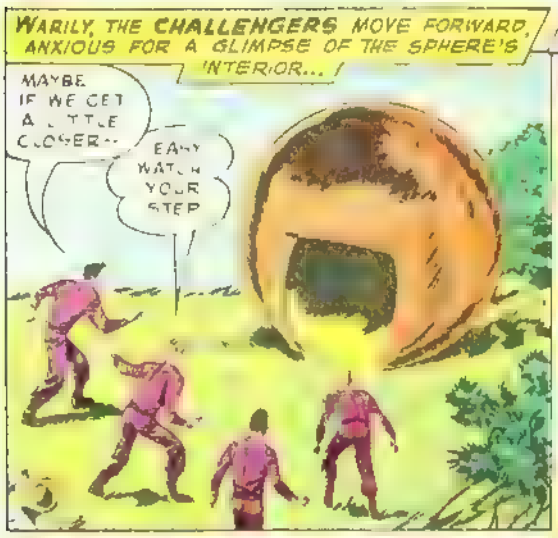

I GET TIRED OF DOING THIS ALL DAY LONG FOR THE TOURISTS!

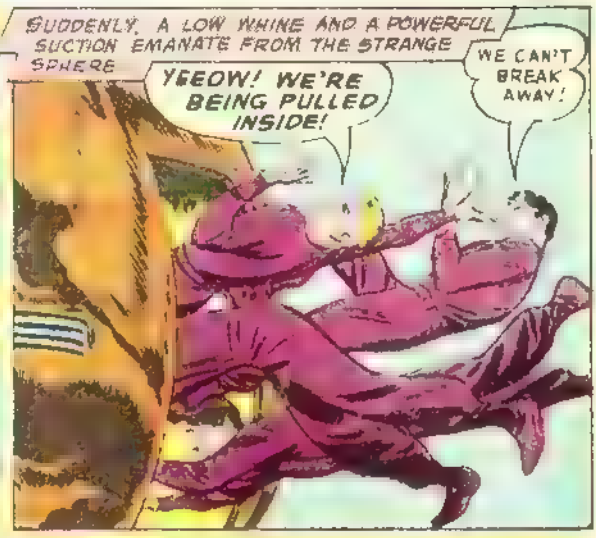
LATER
HELLO, DEAR. I FIXED A NICE DINNER. RICE AND HOT CURRY!

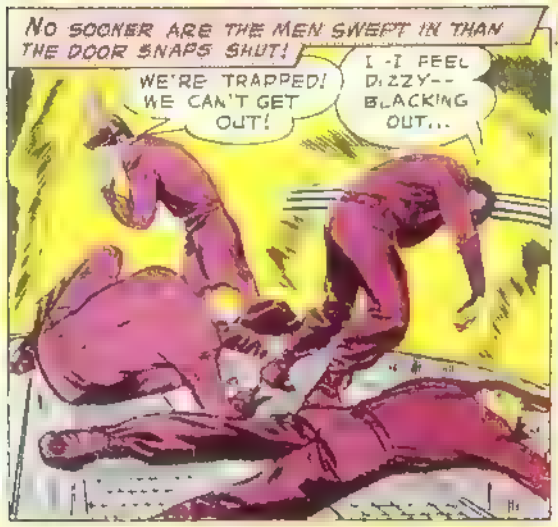

I'D RATHER NOT EAT THAT RIGHT NOW. ALL I WANT IS A COLD SNACK!
END

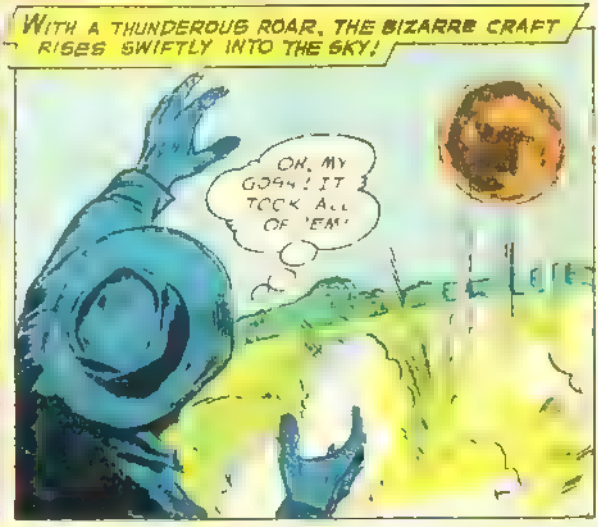
MAN MAY BE THE MASTER OF THE EARTH-- BUT WHAT IS HIS STANDING IN THE UNIVERSE? WHAT OTHER FOOTSTEPS TROD THE DARK, UNEXPLORED VASTNESS BEYOND THE WORLD WE KNOW? THIS QUESTION LOOMS LARGE IN THE LIVES OF THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN WHEN THEY FIND THEMSELVES IN A SITUATION WHICH DEMANDS THAT THEY EITHER DIE AS MEN -- OR LIVE AS...
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
THE HUMAN PETS
THIS THING THAT'S CAGED US IN IS TRYING TO MAKE US PERFORM LIKE TRAINED FLEAS!
HEY, YOU! CUT THAT OUT.
IT DOESN'T UNDERSTAND WHAT WE ARE! WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO BREAK OUT OF HERE!

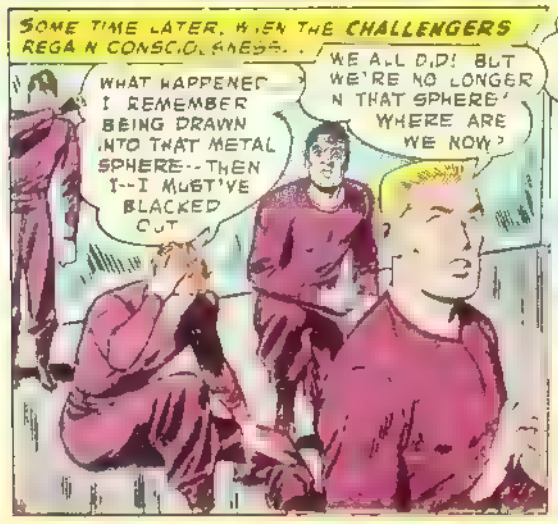
CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN
THE COMMONPLACE! FOR INSTANCE, ONE DAY, ABNER JENKINS TURNS FROM HIS FARMING CHORES, MORE WITH WONDER THAN ALARM, AS A LARGE SPHERE DESCENDS FROM THE SKY...
GREAT JEHOSEPHAT! WHAT IN THE WORLD IS THAT?
JENKINS' FIELD...
BY HARRY! IT'S ONE OF THOSE FLYING THINGAMABOBS I'VE BEEN READING ABOUT IN THE PAPER
SOON AFTER AT THE JENKINS' FARMHOUSE
THE WEATHER'S GOT YOU FOR SURE ABNER!
OH HUSH WOMAN! HELLO-- MYRTLE? SAY, ARE THOSE CHALLENGER FELLERS STILL RESTING UP AT HARPER'S PLACE?... GOOD! RING THE NUMBER, WILL YOU, MYRTLE?
SOON AFTER THEY RECEIVE HIS CALL, THE CHALLENGERS OF THE UNKNOWN ARRIVE
WE CAME IMMEDIATELY--
I HOPE IT'S STILL THERE! JUST FOLLOW ME!
THERE IT IS, BY JINGO RIGHT WHERE IT LANDED
BUT WHAT IS IT? I DON'T SEE ANY VISIBLE MEANS OF LOCOMOTION!
MEN, I SUGGEST WE APPROACH IT CAREFULLY! THERE'S NO TELLING--
LOOK, ACE! THERE'S A DOOR SLIDING OPEN


WARILY, THE CHALLENGERS MOVE FORWARD, ANXIOUS FOR A GLIMPSE OF THE SPHERE'S INTERIOR...!
MAYBE IF WE GET A LITTLE CLOSER--
EASY WATCH YOUR STEP


SUDDENLY, A LOW WHINE AND A POWERFUL SUCTION EMANATE FROM THE STRANGE SPHERE
YEEOW! WE'RE BEING PULLED INSIDE!
WE CAN'T BREAK AWAY!

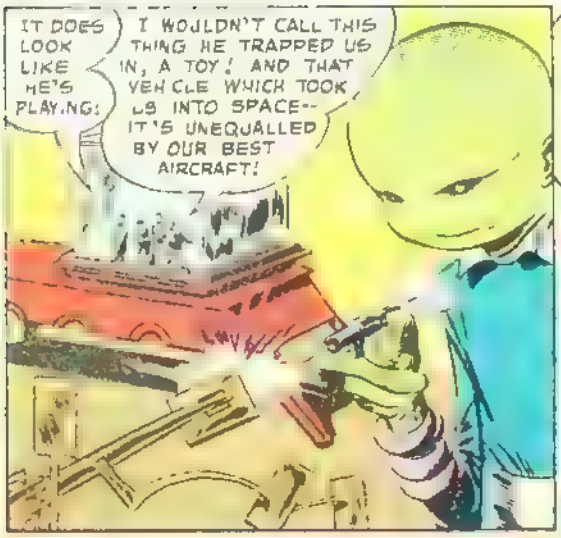

NO SOONER ARE THE MEN SWEPT IN THAN THE DOOR SNAPS SHUT!
WE'RE TRAPPED! WE CAN'T GET OUT!
I-I FEEL DIZZY-- BLACKING OUT...

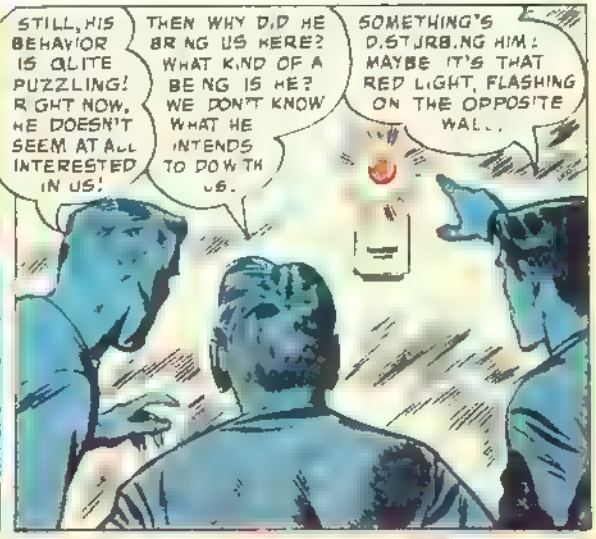

WITH A THUNDEROUS ROAR, THE BIZARRE CRAFT RISES SWIFTLY INTO THE SKY!
OH, MY GOSH! IT TOOK ALL OF 'EM!

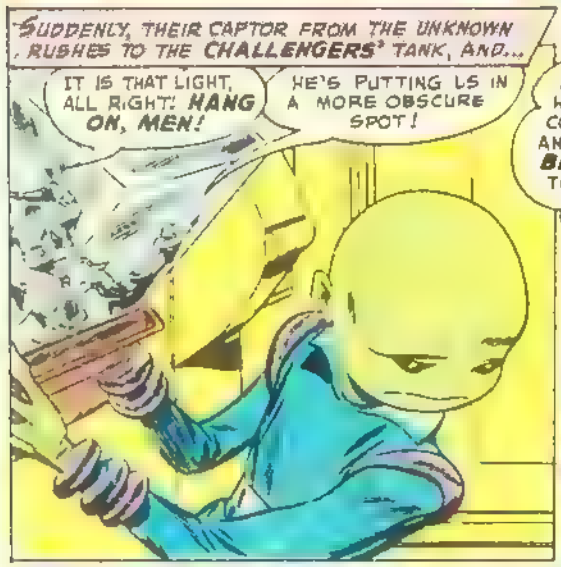

SOME TIME LATER, WHEN THE CHALLENGERS REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS...
WHAT HAPPENED? I REMEMBER BEING DRAWN INTO THAT METAL SPHERE--THEN I--I MUST'VE BLACKED OUT
WE ALL DID! BUT WE'RE NO LONGER IN THAT SPHERE! WHERE ARE WE NOW?

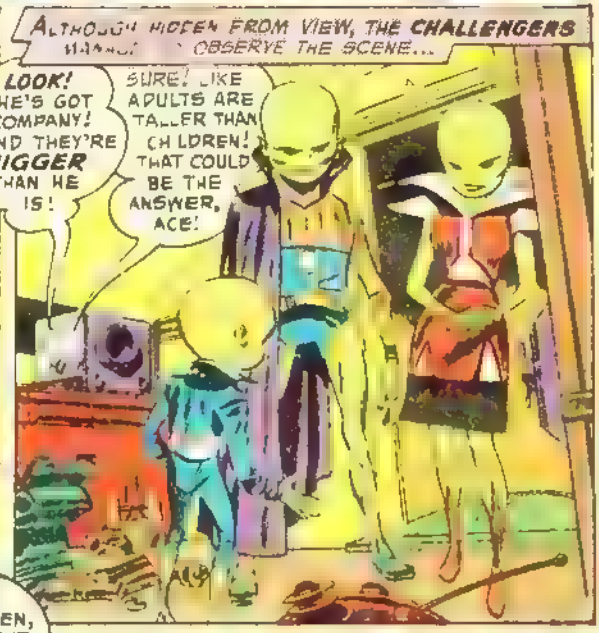
IN SOME SORT OF TRANSPARENT TANK OR CAGE-- AND I THINK IT'S NOT ON EARTH!
I SEE SOMETHING MOVING.. SOMETHING BIG! IT'S COMING TOWARD US!

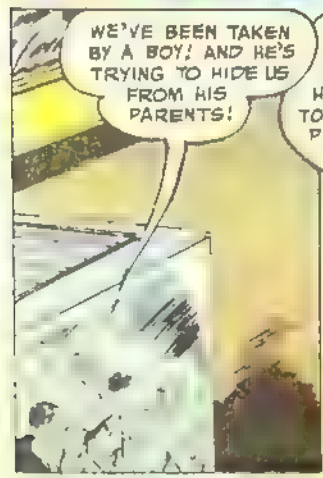
EVEN THE CHALLENGERS HAVE TO GASP IN AMAZEMENT...
A FIGURE! A GIANT FIGURE!
HUGE EYES BEAM BRIGHTLY, AND THE ENORMOUS MOUTH BREAKS INTO A WIDE GRIN. THEN...
BE CAREFUL! THE TOP OF OUR TANK IS BEING SLID BACK!
LOOK OUT! HIS HAND IS REACHING IN!
HEY! HE'S AFTER ME! CUT THAT OUT, YOU GRINNING GOLIATH!
AS THE MEN SCURRY ABOUT TO ESCAPE THE PROBING ROD, GARGANTUAN LAUGHTER ECHOES IN THE AIR!
I'M NOT TAKING ANY MORE OF THIS! I'LL CLIMB UP THIS THING, AND..
DON'T BE A FOOL! YOU'LL BE HURT IF HE SHAKES YOU OFF!
HA-HA-HA-HA!
HE'S WITHDRAWN THE ROD! IT LOOKS LIKE HE WAS JUST AMUSING HIMSELF!
IT'S HUMILIATING! WE'RE NOT TRAINED FLEAS! BE ALERT! HE'S UP TO SOMETHING!
THEN...
THAT LOOKS LIKE FOOD AND WATER! AT LEAST, HE INTENDS TO KEEP US ALIVE!
YES. AS PRISONERS ON A PLANET FAR OUT IN SPACE!
MAYBE HE'S MAKING A SCIENTIFIC STUDY OF US!
I DON'T THINK SO. THOSE OBJECTS LOOK MORE LIKE SOME KIND OF TOYS THAN SCIENTIFIC INSTRUMENTS!


IT DOES LOOK LIKE HE'S PLAYING!
I WOULDN'T CALL THIS THING HE TRAPPED US IN, A TOY! AND THAT VEHICLE WHICH TOOK US INTO SPACE-- IT'S UNEQUALLED BY OUR BEST AIRCRAFT!

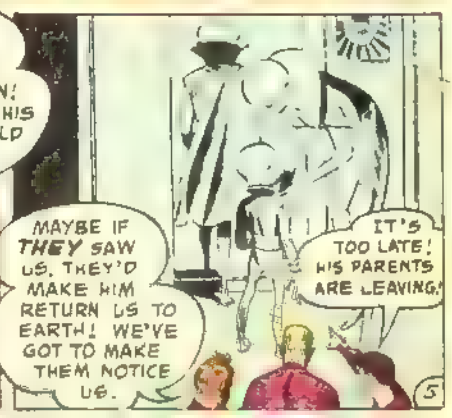

STILL, HIS BEHAVIOR IS QUITE PUZZLING! RIGHT NOW, HE DOESN'T SEEM AT ALL INTERESTED IN US!
THEN WHY DID HE BRING US HERE? WHAT KIND OF A BEING IS HE? WE DON'T KNOW WHAT HE INTENDS TO DO WITH US.
SOMETHING'S DISTURBING HIM! MAYBE IT'S THAT RED LIGHT, FLASHING ON THE OPPOSITE WALL.

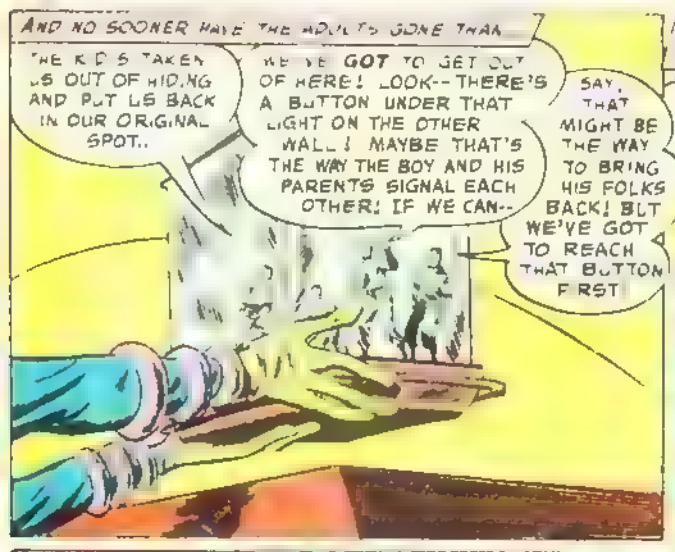

SUDDENLY, THEIR CAPTOR FROM THE UNKNOWN RUSHES TO THE CHALLENGERS' TANK, AND...
IT IS THAT LIGHT, ALL RIGHT! HANG ON, MEN!
HE'S PUTTING US IN A MORE OBSCURE SPOT!

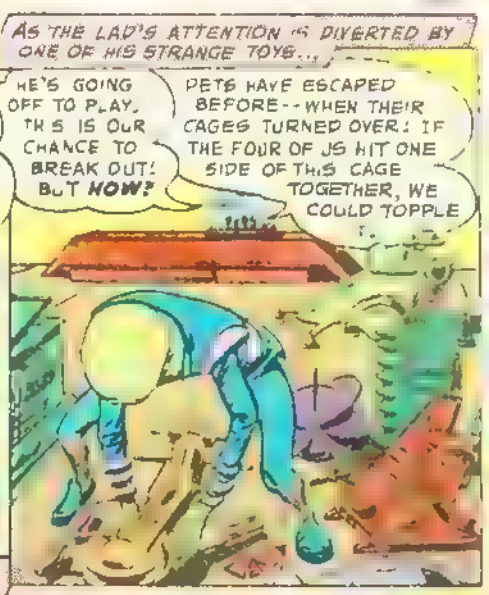

ALTHOUGH HIDDEN FROM VIEW, THE CHALLENGERS
OBSERVE THE SCENE...
LOOK! HE'S GOT COMPANY! AND THEY'RE BIGGER THAN HE IS!
SURE! LIKE ADULTS ARE TALLER THAN CHILDREN! THAT COULD BE THE ANSWER, ACE!

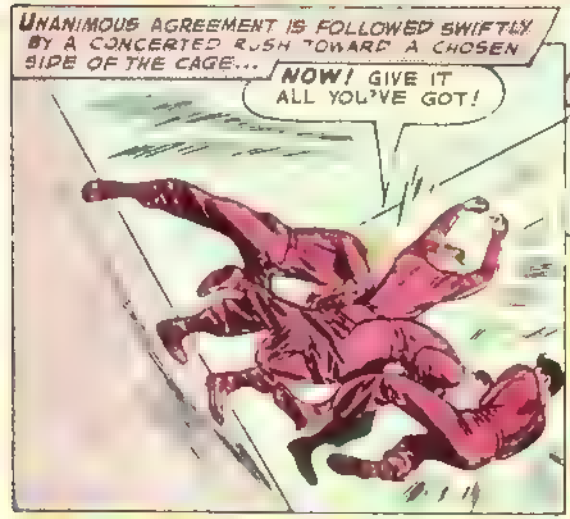

WE'VE BEEN TAKEN BY A BOY! AND HE'S TRYING TO HIDE US FROM HIS PARENTS!

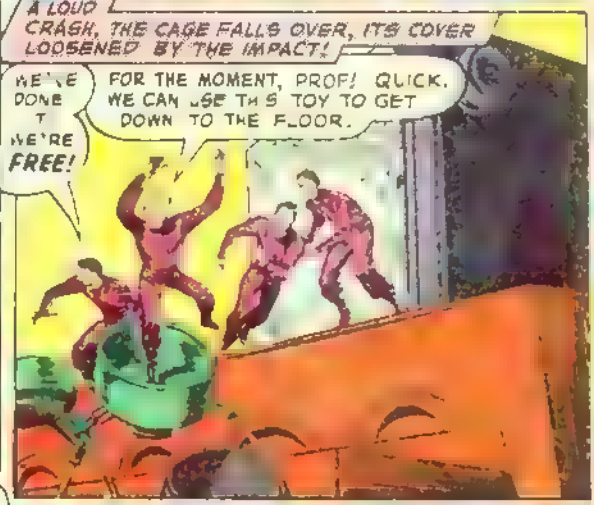
IT ADDS UP! IT MAY SHOCK YOU GENTLEMEN, BUT WE WERE BROUGHT HERE FOR ONE PURPOSE-- TO BE KEPT AS PETS BY THAT CHILD!
PETS HE PICKED UP ON A WORLD THAT ISN'T EVEN HIS OWN! MAYBE THAT'S WHY HIS PARENTS WOULD OBJECT TO US.

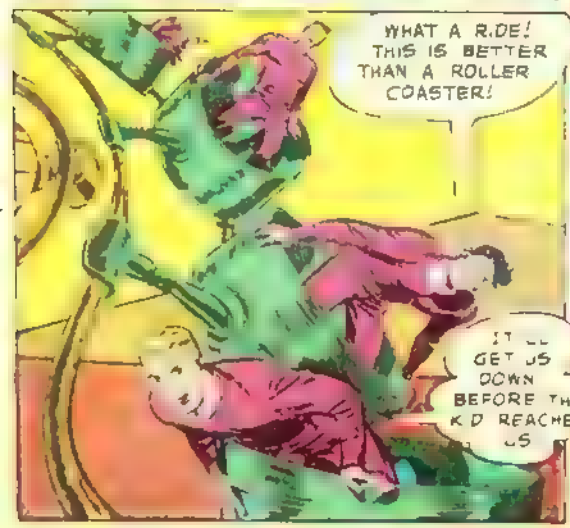

MAYBE IF THEY SAW US, THEY'D MAKE HIM RETURN US TO EARTH! WE'VE GOT TO MAKE THEM NOTICE US.
IT'S TOO LATE! HIS PARENTS ARE LEAVING!

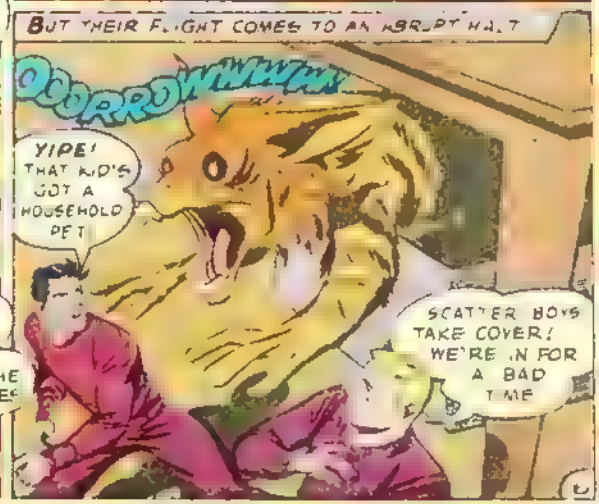

AND NO SOONER HAVE THE ADULTS GONE THAN...
THE KID'S TAKEN US OUT OF HIDING AND PUT US BACK IN OUR ORIGINAL SPOT..
WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE! LOOK--THERE'S A BUTTON UNDER THAT LIGHT ON THE OTHER WALL! MAYBE THAT'S THE WAY THE BOY AND HIS PARENTS SIGNAL EACH OTHER! IF WE CAN--
SAY, THAT MIGHT BE THE WAY TO BRING HIS FOLKS BACK! BUT WE'VE GOT TO REACH THAT BUTTON FIRST!

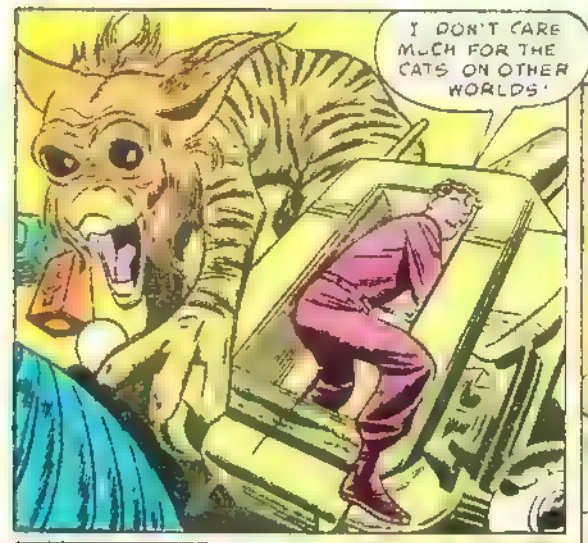

AS THE LAD'S ATTENTION IS DIVERTED BY ONE OF HIS STRANGE TOYS...
HE'S GOING OFF TO PLAY. THIS IS OUR CHANCE TO BREAK OUT! BUT NOW?
PETS HAVE ESCAPED BEFORE--WHEN THEIR CAGES TURNED OVER! IF THE FOUR OF US HIT ONE SIDE OF THIS CAGE TOGETHER, WE COULD TOPPLE

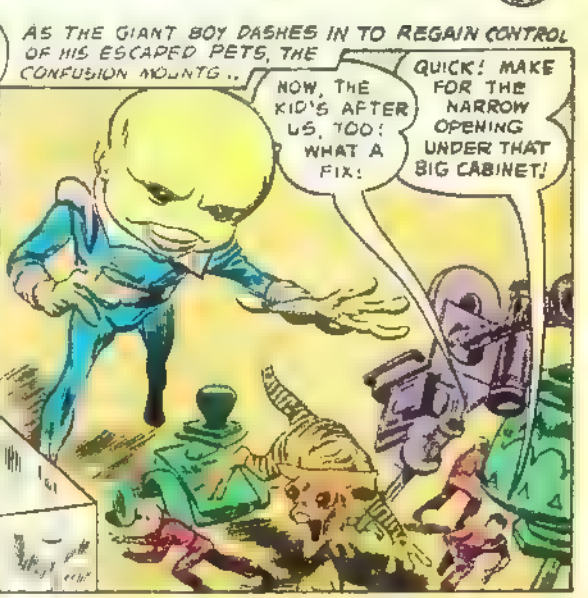

UNANIMOUS AGREEMENT IS FOLLOWED SWIFTLY BY A CONCERTED RUSH TOWARD A CHOSEN SIDE OF THE CAGE...
NOW! GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT!

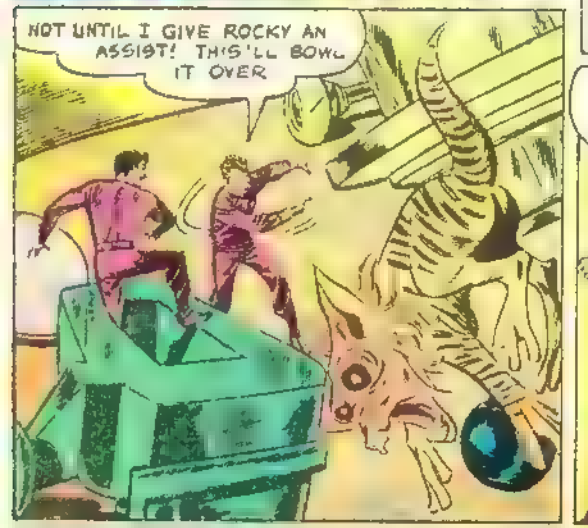

WITH A LOUD CRASH, THE CAGE FALLS OVER, ITS COVER LOOSENED BY THE IMPACT!
WE'VE DONE IT! WE'RE FREE!
FOR THE MOMENT, PROF! QUICK. WE CAN USE THIS TOY TO GET DOWN TO THE FLOOR.

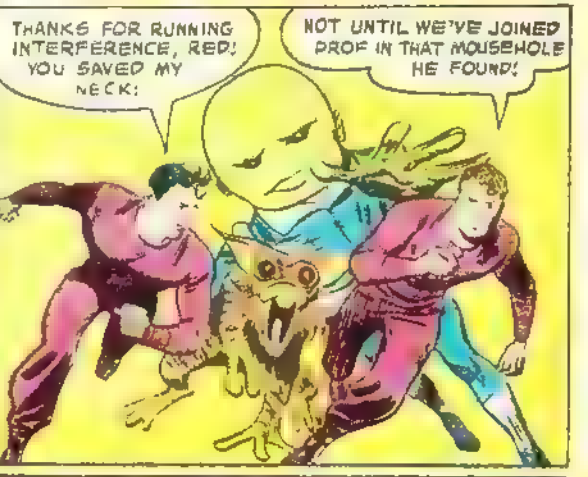

WHAT A RIDE! THIS IS BETTER THAN A ROLLER COASTER!
IT'LL GET US DOWN BEFORE THE KID REACHES US


BUT THEIR FLIGHT COMES TO AN ABRUPT HALT
OOORROWWWWW
YIPE! THAT KID'S GOT A HOUSEHOLD PET!
SCATTER BOYS TAKE COVER! WE'RE IN FOR A BAD TIME


I DON'T CARE MUCH FOR THE CATS ON OTHER WORLDS!

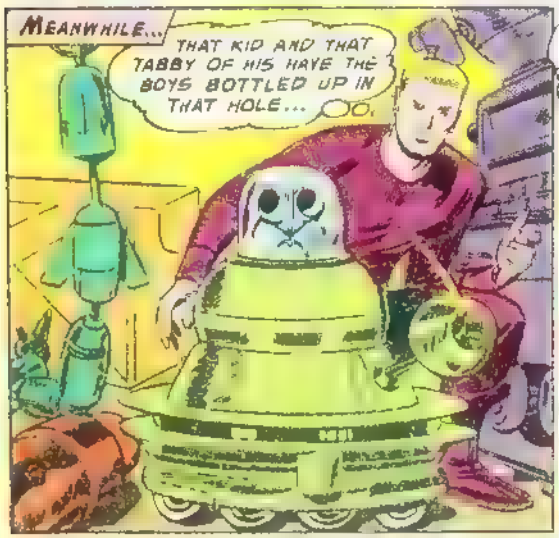

AS THE GIANT BOY DASHES IN TO REGAIN CONTROL OF HIS ESCAPED PETS, THE CONFUSION MOUNTS ..
NOW, THE KID'S AFTER US, TOO! WHAT A FIX!
QUICK! MAKE FOR THE NARROW OPENING UNDER THAT BIG CABINET!


NOT UNTIL I GIVE ROCKY AN ASSIST! THIS'LL BOWL IT OVER

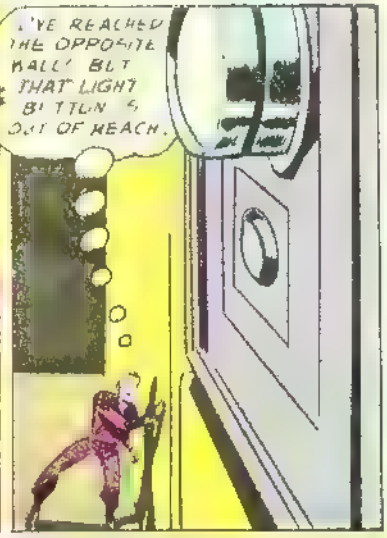

THANKS FOR RUNNING INTERFERENCE, RED! YOU SAVED MY NECK!
NOT UNTIL WE'VE JOINED PROF IN THAT MOUSEHOLE HE FOUND!

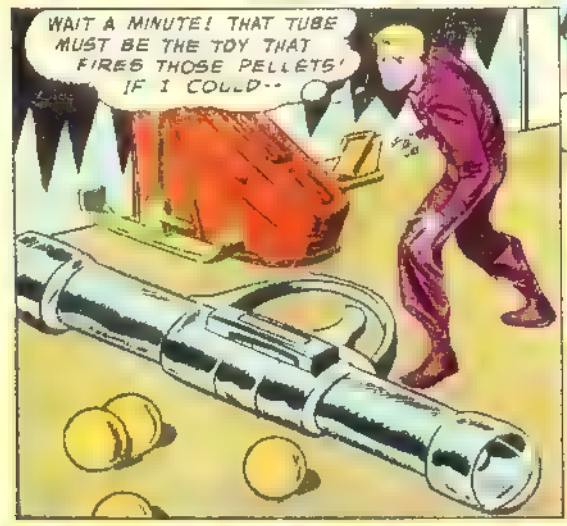
GOT YOU, ROCKY!
MADE IT!... AND NONE TOO SOON!

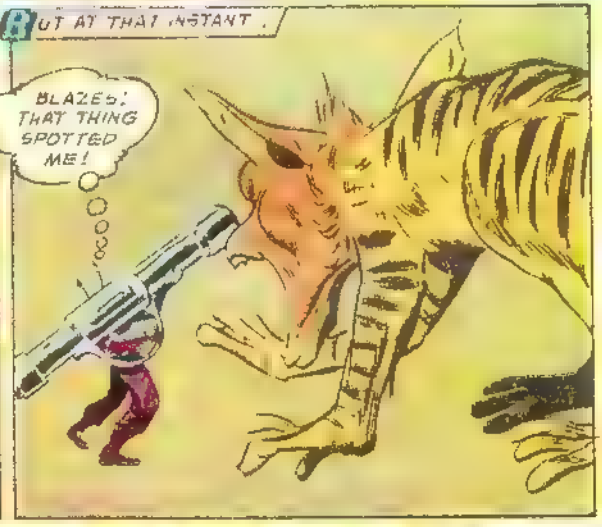
ACE! WHERE'S ACE?
GOOD GRAVY! HE'S STILL OUT THERE--!

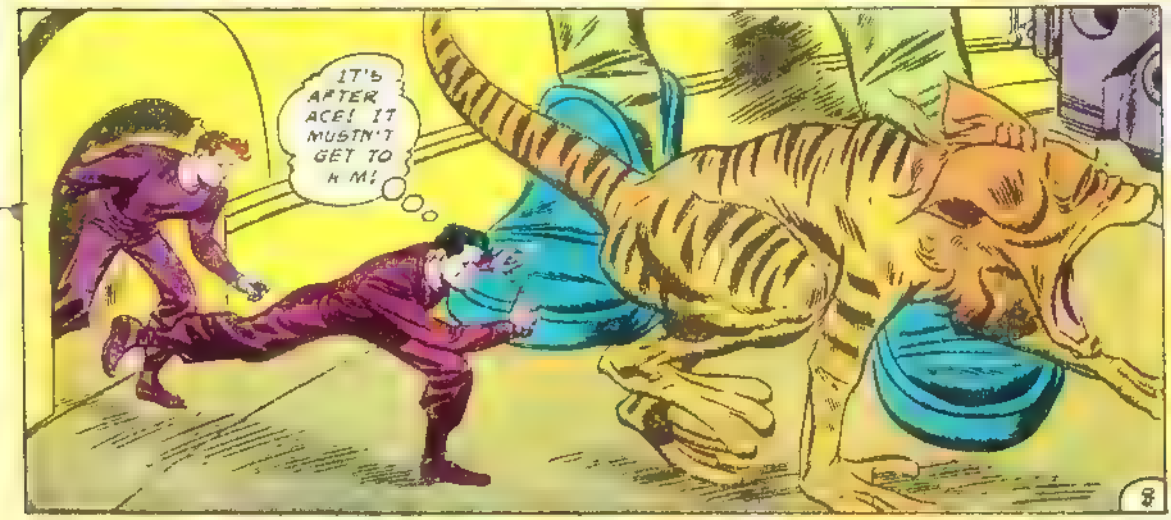

MEANWHILE...
THAT KID AND THAT TABBY OF HIS HAVE THE BOYS BOTTLED UP IN THAT HOLE...

THEY DON'T NOTICE ME THE FIELD IS CLEAR...


I'VE REACHED THE OPPOSITE WALL! BUT THAT LIGHT BUTTON IS OUT OF REACH.

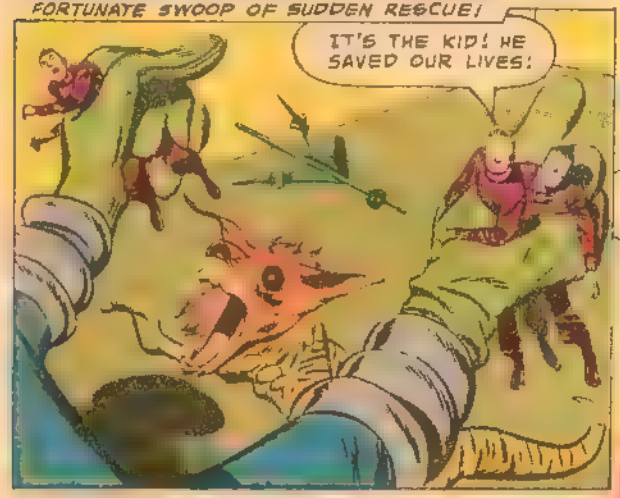

WAIT A MINUTE! THAT TUBE MUST BE THE TOY THAT FIRES THOSE PELLETS! IF I COULD--

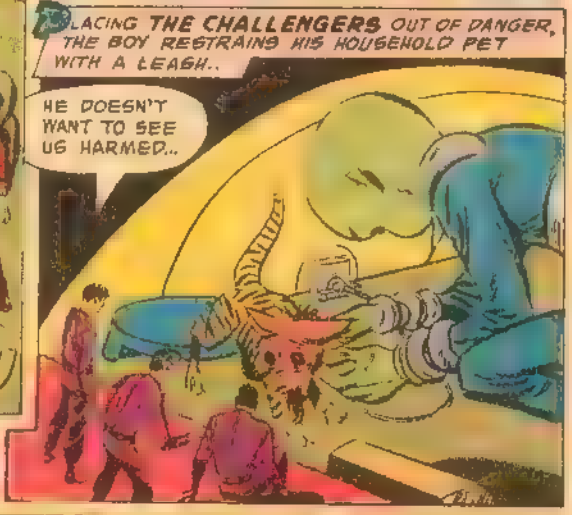

BUT AT THAT INSTANT.
BLAZES! THAT THING SPOTTED ME!

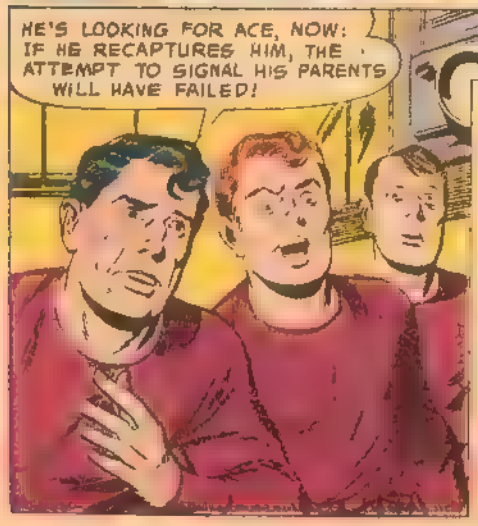

IT'S AFTER ACE! IT MUSTN'T GET TO HIM!

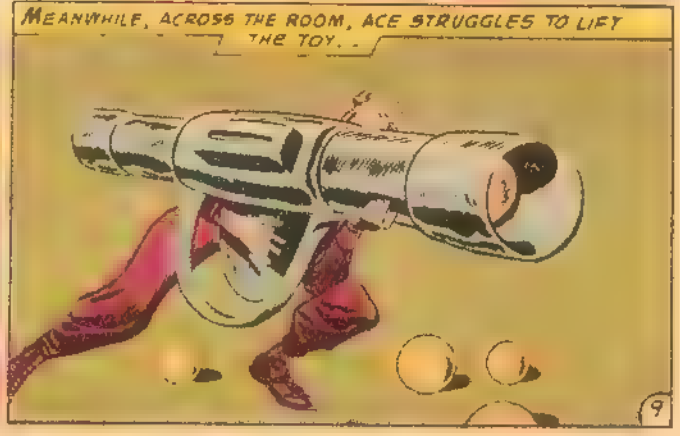
RISKING THEIR OWN LIVES, ROCKY, RED AND PROF ATTACK THE ALIEN ANIMAL.
ROCKY! LOOK OUT!
THERE'S NO OTHER WAY--

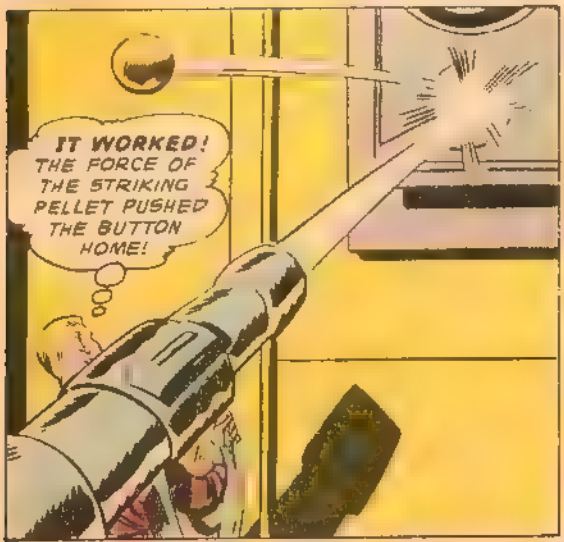
QUICKLY, THE ANIMAL TURNS ITS FURY UPON ITS ASSAILANTS.
IT'S CHARGING US! WE HAVEN'T GOT A CHANCE!

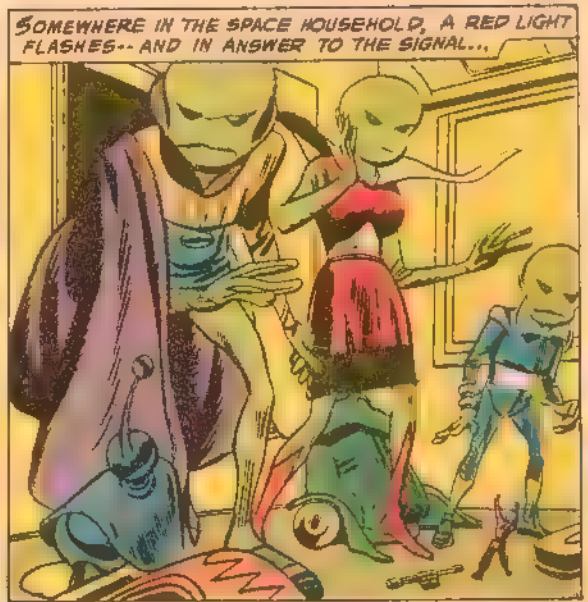

BUT SWIFTER THAN THE ONRUSHING MENACE IS THE FORTUNATE SWOOP OF SUDDEN RESCUE!
IT'S THE KID! HE SAVED OUR LIVES!

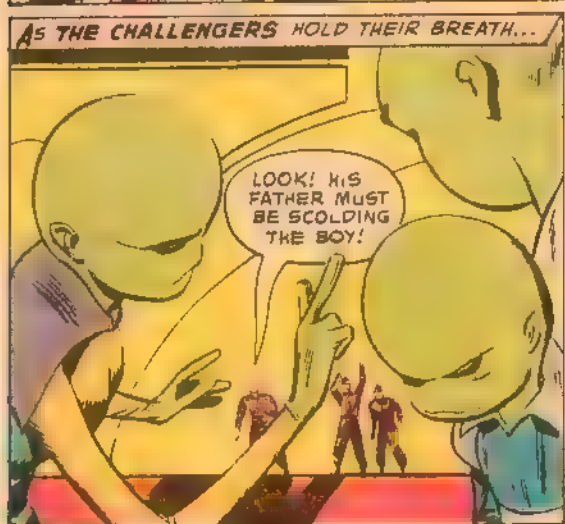

PLACING THE CHALLENGERS OUT OF DANGER, THE BOY RESTRAINS HIS HOUSEHOLD PET WITH A LEASH..
HE DOESN'T WANT TO SEE US HARMED..

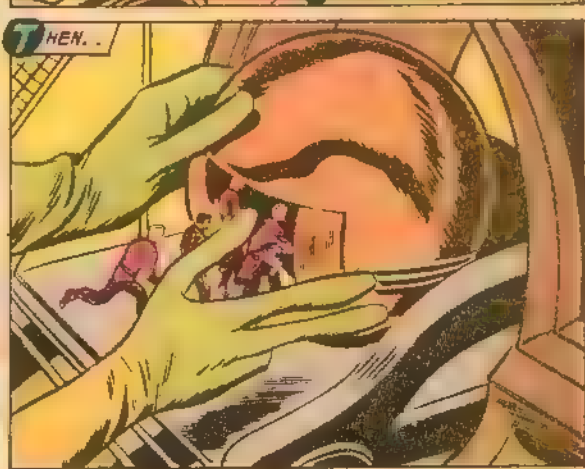

HE'S LOOKING FOR ACE, NOW: IF HE RECAPTURES HIM, THE ATTEMPT TO SIGNAL HIS PARENTS WILL HAVE FAILED!

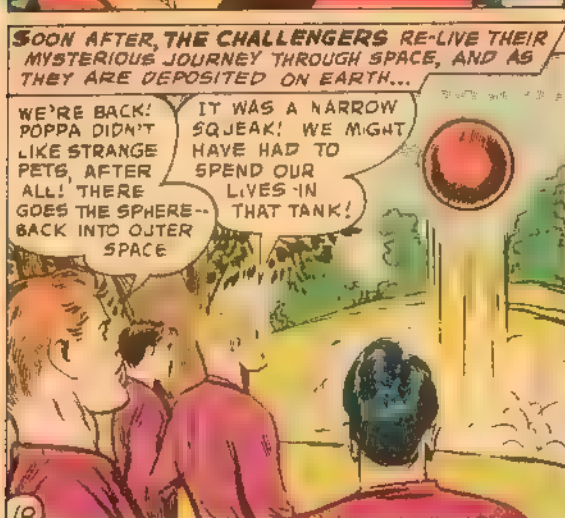

MEANWHILE, ACROSS THE ROOM, ACE STRUGGLES TO LIFT THE TOY..

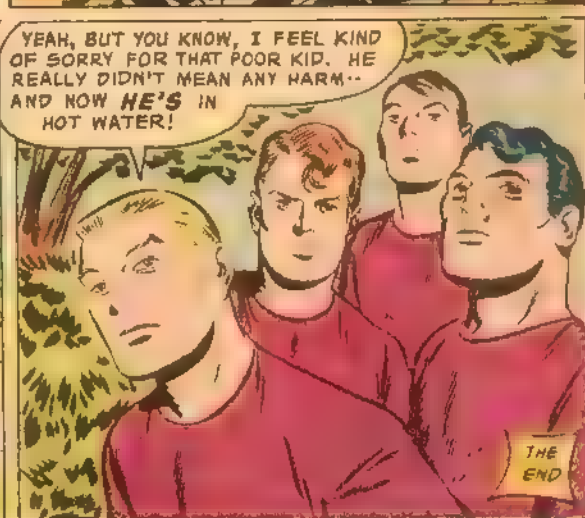

IT WORKED! THE FORCE OF THE STRIKING PELLET PUSHED THE BUTTON HOME!


SOMEWHERE IN THE SPACE HOUSEHOLD, A RED LIGHT FLASHES-- AND IN ANSWER TO THE SIGNAL...

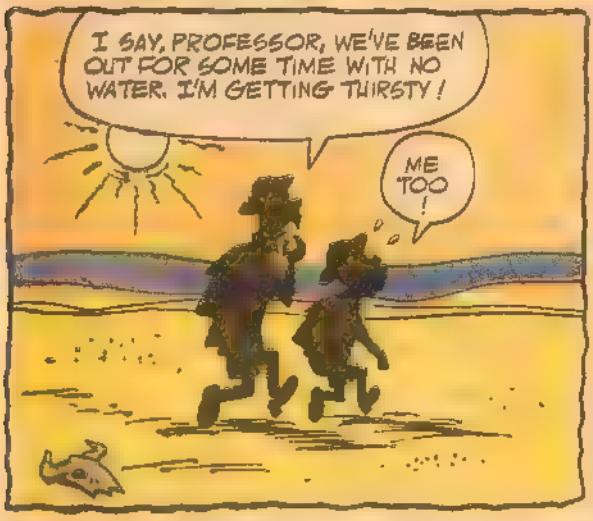

AS THE CHALLENGERS HOLD THEIR BREATH...
LOOK! HIS FATHER MUST BE SCOLDING THE BOY!

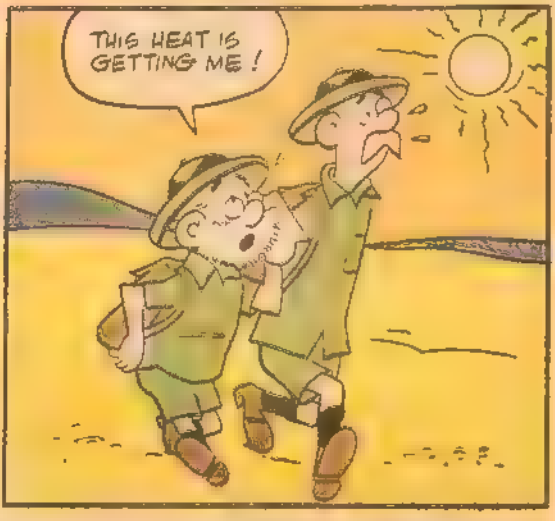

THEN..

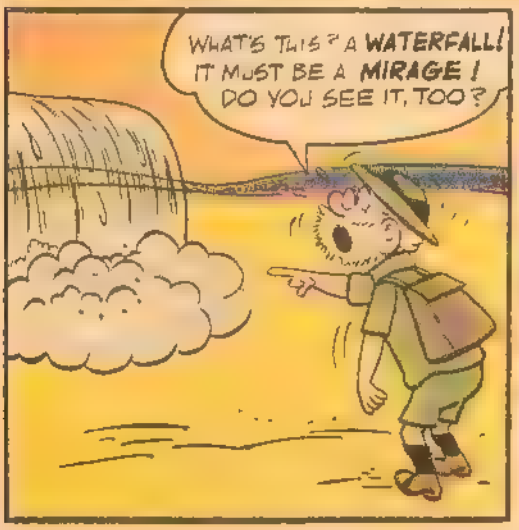

SOON AFTER, THE CHALLENGERS RE-LIVE THEIR MYSTERIOUS JOURNEY THROUGH SPACE, AND AS THEY ARE DEPOSITED ON EARTH...
WE'RE BACK! POPPA DIDN'T LIKE STRANGE PETS, AFTER ALL! THERE GOES THE SPHERE-- BACK INTO OUTER SPACE
IT WAS A NARROW SQUEAK! WE MIGHT HAVE HAD TO SPEND OUR LIVES IN THAT TANK!

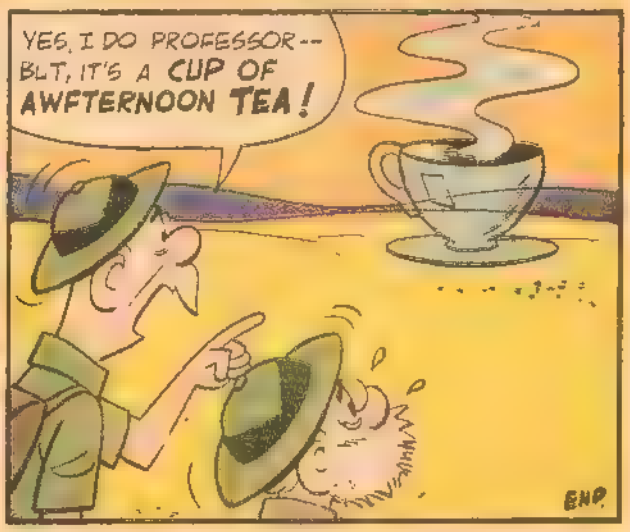

YEAH, BUT YOU KNOW, I FEEL KIND OF SORRY FOR THAT POOR KID. HE REALLY DIDN'T MEAN ANY HARM-- AND NOW HE'S IN HOT WATER!
THE END

PROFESSOR EUREKA









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AFTER

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